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*'Poor as a Poet':  
Macpherson, Burns and the Peasant Poet*

My title is not meant as a critical reflection on either Macpherson or Burns. It is taken from Henry Shanks' *The Peasant Poets of Scotland* (1881):

'Poor as a Poet,' is one of those true and trite remarks which have become proverbial; and that Burns both lived and died poor, only proves how completely he was a true son of Parnassus. There would seem to be some natural affinity between poverty and poetry.<sup>1</sup>

Shanks' statement typifies nineteenth century perceptions of the 'natural' Scottish poet born into humble circumstances, blessed with divine inspiration if not formal education. In this paper, I hope to shed new light on the connexions between Macpherson's inspired bard Ossian, Burns as 'heaven-taught ploughman' and the notion of 'the peasant poet' in Scotland.

It is vital to consider Macpherson's aesthetic context and the Enlightenment's Englishing of Scottish poetry, recently profiled by Robert Crawford in *Devolving English Literature* (1992). Works like Hutcheson's *An Enquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and Henry Home, Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism* (1762) established elitist codes of taste. Smith, for instance, dismissed Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725) for neglecting 'the duty of a poet to write like a gentleman' and using 'that homely style which some think fit to call the language of nature'. Such statements created a dismissive atmosphere around those considered to be self-taught.<sup>2</sup>

As a student at Aberdeen University, Macpherson was influenced by Thomas Reid and James Beattie; the Common Sense input on his work is intriguing. Macpherson must have been aware of Frances Hutcheson's notion that a person is born good; the 'noble savage' Ossian is a prelapsarian hero. The vitality of early societies, stressed by works like William

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Duncan's translation of Caesar's *Commentaries* (1753) and Blackwell's *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer* (1735), led Macpherson further towards seeking a social and poetic prototype. The poetry of 'primitive' societies was portrayed as emotionally vigorous in publications like Robert Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753). Scots and Gaelic poetry, by extension, should be 'sublime' and 'wild' and peasant poets, therefore, should specialise in pathetic verse.

Macpherson's Ossian drew on Allan Ramsay's iconic *Gentle Shepherd*. Patie was a prototype autodidact: natural and rural and skilled in the arts of love, this neo-classical Shepherd sang in acceptable Scots-English and was fictional proof 'Books can raise a Peasant's Mind/Above a Lord's'. Macpherson refined aspects of the Southern Scots Gentle Shepherd into his martial, Northern bard, Ossian (a notion appropriated to pastoral ends by Burns, a Southern Scot with North-East roots, and Hogg, the Borders editor of *Jacobite Relics*). Macpherson's collation and editing satisfied a craving for a 'real' (albeit legendary) Gentle Shepherd: a poet of the people with noble ancestors and roots in the land.<sup>3</sup>

The matter of Ossian offered an aspirational image to peasant poets. According to Gaelic tradition – *The Book of the Dean of Lismore* for instance – Ossian was a seventh-century Bard; an elderly man mourning the days of Scotland's lost guardians, the warrior Fianna. Like the classical blind bards Thamyras and Tiresias, he had prophetic powers. For Macpherson and his mentor Hugh Blair (then Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh University) the Celts were an ideal society with bards as agents of cultural integration. Macpherson's language – elegant English with the exotic twist of Gaelic translation – made Ossianic verse palatable. *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), furthermore, was particularly resonant for rustic poets. Its mourning lovers, 'lovely' daughters, warriors and 'meteor' spirits (a Homeric image Burns and Hogg both used) hinted at nobly wild Northerners unlike the raucous Highlanders of Lowland oral tradition:

on the hill, beneath the aged trees, old Ossian sat on the moss, the last of the race of Fingal. Sightless are his aged eyes; his beard is waving in the wind. Dull through the leafless trees he heard the voice of the earth. Sorrow revived in his soul: he began and lamented the dead.<sup>4</sup>

Situated within nature, almost as a natural feature, a picturesque listener to the 'voice of the earth', the inspired bard Ossian was an attractive early peasant poet.

Macpherson's Ossian had an inclusive appeal for Scottish poets. Scotland's supposedly rediscovered epic, *Fingal* (1761/62), develops the semi-classical, melancholic *Fragments* bard as the member of a bardic community: 'Many a voice and many a harp in tuneful notes arose' (*Fingal*

III). Even Blair recognised such language 'refined' the original but the bard supposedly had real roots in the past. The 'inspired' national poet was developed in *Temora* (1765) in an even more romantic way. Its preliminary 'Dissertation' stresses these were the reliable traditions of the ethnically pure: 'a people, from all time, free of intermixture with foreigners. . . the inhabitants of the mountains of Scotland' ('A Dissertation', pp.205–06).

Ossian goes beyond the idea of the Ramsayan shepherd by offering a tamed (and broken) poet of the people; Miltonic overtones added an air of ponderous dignity. The mountain man Ossian represented a vanishing traditional culture which, as Scotland became increasingly literary-orientated, paralleled current developments (the process went a step further with Burns and then Hogg into a period of sanitised 'peasantry'). Described in vague terms, Ossian is the mouthpiece of his people with the potential for multiple imaginative reconstructions. An appropriated image creates the quintessential Northern bard: orally driven, tragic, celebrating a lost culture, noble in feeling, elderly but vigorous, unthreatening, dependent and poor. All these elements determined future notions of national peasant poets.

Fiona Stafford's *The Sublime Savage* (1988) makes a convincing case for Macpherson's psychological identification with Ossian and the national losses he commemorates. His contemporaries made a similar connexion, enhancing interest in Macpherson as a mountain bard. In *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, The Son of Fingal* (1763), Blair identifies Ossian's appeal as a national hero drawn in 'natural pictures' expressing the 'feelings of our fellow-creatures in the most artless ages'. Expectations of work by rustic poets – which had value for 'persons of taste' – were established by this. Acceptably refined savages, like learned Homeric rhapsodes, Celtic bards formed a 'college or order of men' and Ossian anticipated the eighteenth-century man of feeling, 'endowed by nature with an exquisite sensibility' and 'tender melancholy'. The 'regular epic' *Fingal* was even, in some respects, superior to Homeric epic, with more 'diversity' and 'propriety', given the 'noble and pleasing' ending of reconciliation. Ossian's imagery was 'copied from that face of nature . . . before his eyes' of a 'northern mountainous region'. At once 'rude', 'wild' and 'sublime', Ossian's 'genius' was of 'nature, not of art'. This 'irregular and unpolished' poetry had 'enthusiasm . . . vehemence and fire'.<sup>5</sup> Blair's statements helped to create a language for criticising autodidacts, as well as a behavioural model for peasant poets. Shanks' ideas are a debased version of Blair's.

For later critics, Macpherson took on his own bard's image as a semi-savage, impoverished aristocrat who was neither peasant nor autodidact. Born at Invertromie on Spey, his parents were relatives of Macpherson of Cluny, the dispossessed clan chief whose escapades during nine years in

hiding, after Culloden, offered romantic material for Stevenson in *Kidnapped* (1886). The incongruity of Macpherson's noble descent and degenerate circumstances, along with his association with the increasingly fashionable Highlands, proved almost impossible to resist. Bailey Saunders, in *The Life and Letters of James Macpherson* (1894) notes that Macpherson was 'a cousin to the chief of the clan' from an 'ancient' family but adds 'Macpherson's parents, however, were not able to hold their heads very high'; 'young Macpherson was born and brought up, "a barefit laddie"'.<sup>6</sup> Judged by his social circumstances, the poet exemplified declined and picturesque nobility. The identification of creation and creator recurrently affected so-called autodidacts. At once primitive and cultured, unthreateningly modern but pleasantly associated with savages, Macpherson was doubly attractive, a latter day Gentle Shepherd from the 'rough and lawless' Highlands. This view of Macpherson largely neglects his university education and later economic success.

Macpherson and Burns can be seen as providing fictional and real representatives, respectively, of the Scottish peasant poet; several Enlightenment figures offer points of contact between the two. James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, whose *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1773–92) asserts that people progress from the animal to the savage to the civilised, identified MacPherson's Ossian as 'the most antient remains of the Celtic'. Monboddo, through his interest in Burns, perhaps offered views of the noble savage Ossian directly to the first real Scottish autodidact. Blair too, by supporting Macpherson in his *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), and by promoting Burns in Edinburgh, is a key figure in laying the foundations of autodidactic theory. In his *Second Commonplace Book*, Burns expressed his 'liking' for Blair, adding: 'Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. . . . but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing'. It was at the least providential, too, that John Home should be both a supporter of Macpherson as a genuine translator, and admired by Burns. Norval, the tragically fated son of *Douglas* (1757), is a Gentle Shepherd figure (nobly born but reared as a shepherd). Furthermore, there is a direct relationship between Henry Mackenzie's concept of Burns as a genuine 'heaven-taught ploughman' (1786) and his appreciation of Macpherson's Ossian in the *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the poems of Ossian* (1805). Mackenzie thought the Ossianic poems exemplified real poetry of 'a most impressive and striking sort, in a high degree eloquent, tender, and sublime' even if Macpherson added 'what he conceived to be dignity and delicacy'.<sup>7</sup> Burns at his best, for Mackenzie, conformed to these criteria.

Ossian as a poet of nature links with Burns' self-concept as a poet of



'Nature's Making', to create an even more palatable noble savage within the Scottish literary tradition. Burns was, of course, sceptical about Macpherson – there is the joke of 'the Twa Dogs' in referring to Cuchullin's dog in *Fingal* (after whom Burns had named his own canine):

The tither was a *ploughman's collie*  
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,  
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,  
And in his freaks had *Luath* ca'd him.  
After some dog in *Highlan Sang*,  
Was made lang syne, lord knows how lang.

Burns pursued the Ossianic myth during his 'Tour of the Highlands' with William Nicol; this included visits to 'Ossian's Grave' near Crieff, and Macpherson's mountain country in Badenoch.<sup>8</sup> Macpherson and Burns both enjoyed bardic posturing and Burns' habitual melancholia, perhaps, is related to Ossian's. The idea of inspiration, though, is the key link between Burns and Macpherson.

Burns' individual contribution to autodidactic theory, though, was in being a real peasant poet and there are significant differences between Macpherson and Burns. Macpherson, crucially, won financial encouragement in his collecting where Burns struggled for economic support. A real autodidact was less appealing than a cultural translator like Macpherson. As David Daiches has observed, Macpherson pleased the *literati* for patriotic and ideological reasons: 'the view Macpherson presented of a noble and primitive people coincided with their philosophy . . . [in the case of Burns] the *literati* were more suspicious of the results of an education from heaven in practice . . . than they were in theory'.<sup>9</sup>

Burns' qualified admiration for Macpherson is apparent from his letters. Writing to Murdoch in 1783 Burns included Macpherson's Ossian among his 'favourite authors of the sentim<sup>l</sup> kind' like Thomson and Mackenzie: 'models after which I endeavour to form my conduct'.<sup>10</sup> In a 1786 letter to Archibald Lawrie, including two volumes of Ossian along with 'the remaining Vol. of the Songs', Burns paid Macpherson a double-edged compliment: 'Ossian I am not in such a hurry about; but I wish the Songs, with the Vol. of the Scotch Poets, returned as soon as they can conveniently be dispatched' (Letters, i, 61). Writing as 'A Poet of Nature's Making' to Peter Hill, Burns uses 'truly Ossianic' as a term of high praise for the poet James Cririe. To Agnes McLehose in 1788, he quotes *Fingal* I, xv, referring to his dark mood of the last night, 'all the cheerfulness of this morning is the fruit of some serious, important ideas that lie . . . beyond "the dark and the narrow house," as Ossian, prince of Poets, says' (Letters, i,

226). Writing to Blair in 1787 the poet, borrowing from Macpherson (and Homer) talks of his 'meteor-like novelty' (Hogg also utilised the 'meteor' image) and anticipates sufferings: 'abuse or almost even neglect will not surprize me' (*Letters* i, 101).

Burns consciously presented himself, like Ossian, as the voice of his community. For instance, writing to Dr Moore in 1787, Burns declared: 'my strongest wish is, to please my Compeers, the rustic Inmates of the Hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners will allow me to be relished' (*Letters*, i, 80). There were benefits to Burns in his peasant poet background, especially the rich vein of traditional material he worked, like Macpherson. However, as 'inmates' suggests, he was well aware of a potentially repressive side to being considered as a 'rustic' phenomenon. The term 'heaven-taught ploughman', invented by Mackenzie in *The Lounger*, and acknowledging Beattie's 'heaven-taught' *Minstrel*, is at best ambivalent. The phrase suggests a neutralised version of Ossian; swords being turned metaphorically into ploughshares to create the first, true, Scottish peasant poet. In the process, important aspects of poetic creativity become secondary to divine inspiration, typecasting Burns and his autodidactic successors as curiosities. Mackenzie's preference for 'almost English' poems 'The Vision' and 'To a Mountain-Daisy' (*Poems*, 62, 92), moreover, confirmed prejudices against imaginative writing by Burns (and later autodidacts) in Scots.<sup>11</sup>

Burns, of course, actively acted the 'illiterate ploughman' subject to 'pure inspiration', particularly when this was to his benefit, as Robert Anderson noted in 1799. Being subject to the vagaries of patrons who enjoyed encounters with a living Ossianic figure, however, often rankled. Like later autodidacts, Burns resented demeaning himself for patrons but felt it was necessary. Burns postured as a post-Ossianic peasant in letters to ladies like Mrs Stewart of Stair and Mrs McLehose, to the latter as the neo-classical Sylvander. Occasionally, the mask slipped, as seen in the letter 'from the regions of Hell' to Mrs Riddell (Burns confesses to being 'rude to a woman' when drunk, anticipating Hogg's gentler impropriety of addressing Scott's wife as 'Charlotte' [*Letters* ii, 609]).<sup>12</sup>

Burns' poetry consummately blends acceptance and rejection of his 'heaven-taught', quasi-Ossianic image. 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' (*Poems*, 72), for later autodidacts, offered a prototype scene of 'hamlet' life and 'The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene'. The 'simple plough-boy' reconstructed rustic scenes, too, in 'Halloween' and 'Tam o' Shanter' (*Poems*, 73, 321). In 'The Vision' (*Poems*, 62) Burns' Muse, with her 'wildly-witty, rustic grace' offered an attractive model to later writers (Hogg's Muse, for example, is like this).<sup>13</sup> Few peasant poets escaped the 'Cotter's' influence, even educated autodidacts like John Leyden and David Gray (university-

taught yet considered peasants for their rustic origins) and industrious women like Janet Hamilton. On the other hand, Burns attacks the process whereby those considered socially inferior were 'disrespek't' in 'The Twa Dogs' (*Poems*, 71).

Nineteenth century biographers, ignoring Burns' sophisticated posturing, generally presented him as an inspired, post-Ossianic bard. Using language resonant of Blair's description of Ossian, Currie comments that Burns was subject to 'rudeness' in rhyme and 'strange and uncouth' language; the 'repulsive' impressions of these, however, were mitigated by the writer's underlying 'sentiment'. Two aspects of the heaven-taught ploughman image owed a debt to Ossian: the noble, and the savage. In its first mode, as inspired poet of nature, the image is closest to Macpherson's Ossian. This prevailed in works like R.H. Cromek's *Reliques of Robert Burns* (1808), appreciating 'the wild-flowers of his muse'. The *Eclectic Review* (1809) noted Burns' 'partial education' created 'wild and magnificent diversity'. 'Rantin, rovin Robin', on the other hand (developing a 'dissipated' side seen in Currie) was the figure profiled by Jeffrey who, in reviewing Cromek's *Reliques* in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1809, raged at Burns' poor moral standards, only excused by his 'original lowness'. Scott, in *The Quarterly Review* of 1809, pointed out that, as an Ossianic 'child of impulse and feeling' Burns was incapable of 'the steady principle which cleaves to that which is good'. On the other hand, Alexander Peterkin's *A Review of the Life of Robert Burns* (1815) rejected the classification of Burns as a 'plebian poet' like Stephen Duck and Thomas Dermody. However, he used some of the language of Ossianic criticism to do so, stating Burns was 'manly, sublime' as well as 'truly British'. Peterkin includes a letter from David Gray highlighting this 'caricature' version of Burns (Gray was not only Burns' friend but Hogg's brother-in-law, perhaps encouraging the Ettrick Shepherd to adopt his 'peasant poet' persona).<sup>14</sup>

Nineteenth-century Scottish peasant poets, in any case, were inspired by Burns' remaking of the Ossianic bardic image. Astutely, J.G. Lockhart, who contributed to Hogg's typecasting in *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk* (1819), draws attention to the inspirational effect Burns had on later Scottish peasant poets, like James Hogg and Allan Cunningham: 'The Cotter's Saturday, in this respect, allowed among "the first-born of Egypt" . . . feelings which would never have been developed within their being, had there been no Burns'. Cunningham, in *The Works of Robert Burns* (1834), presents the inspired 'rustic poet' in association with his work; sustaining this idea a later, illustrated edition has Burns appear in plates for 'Green Grow the Rashes O' and 'For a' that and a' that' (*Poems*, 45, 482). James Hogg claimed to be Burns' poetic descendant and critics often agreed. Paralleling 'Burns and the Ettrick Shepherd' in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1819), Wilson thought

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Scotland the greatest nation in the world for 'peasant poets'. Hogg excelled in 'wild poetry'. Shanks considered Hogg to be the quintessential peasant poet, educationally disadvantaged beyond Burns. In his own *Memoir* (1836) of Burns, Hogg uses the vocabulary of Ossianic criticism to parallel himself with Burns as a poet of 'strong passions', which made him 'the splendid meteor of our imagination'.<sup>15</sup>

Hogg, fascinated by the North in his *Highland Tours* of the early 1800s and *Jacobite Relics* (1819–21), added final touches to the stereotype of the Scottish peasant poets. As national *Mountain Bard* (1807) and lyrical *Forest Minstrel* (1810), Hogg developed aspects of the Ossianic and Burnsian personae into the pastoral 'Ettrick Shepherd'. *Queen Hynde* (1825), most spectacularly, follows Ossianic models. This is an Ossianic tale of Norse invasion, and Irish assistance to the beleaguered Scottish monarch, Hynde. Here, as elsewhere, Hogg postures as a Southern version of the Northern natural bard Ossian:

Say, may the meteor of the wild,  
Nature's unstaïd, erratic child,  
That glimmers o'er the forest fen,  
Or twinkles in the darksome glen,  
Can that be bound, can that be rein'd?  
By cold ungenial rules restrain'd?  
No! – leave it to its ample home,  
The boundless wilderness to roam;  
To gleam, to tremble, and to die:  
'Tis nature's error, so am I. . . .

O fain would I borrow the harp of that land,  
Where the dark sullen eagle broods over the strand,  
Afar in the correi where shrub never grew;  
Or mounts on the pinion away from the view,  
On beams of the morning to journey alone,  
And peal his loud matin where echoes are none –  
The harp of that region of storm and of calm.


(Parts First and Fourth)

As 'Nature's unstaïd, erratic child' Hogg both accepts and rejects peasant poet stereotyping. The resistance to 'cold ungenial rules' suggests, paradoxically, a conformity to the 'rules' of inspiration. *Hynde* implies throughout that the modern autodidact is more sophisticated than the ancient harpist, with a scepticism akin to the anonymous 1762 satire on Macpherson, *Gisbal, An Hyperborean Tale*.<sup>16</sup> However, Hogg's poetic

concerns reflect the autodidactic model suggested by Macpherson's Ossian and perfected by Burns.

Autodidactic poets drew both strength, and weaknesses, from the literary creations of Macpherson's Ossian and Burns, as national peasant poets. On the one hand, they were offered creative precedents and possibilities, facilitating a rise in poetic confidence among the self taught. Derick Thomson has noted the influence of Macpherson on Gaelic poets, including the nineteenth-century, self-taught tailor poet of Islay, Uilleam MacDhunleibhe (William Livingstone). Similarly Burns' 'Compeers', like David Sillar, proudly posed as peasant poets. Sillar, in 'Epistle to the Critics', asserts he 'gat my learnin' at the flail, / And some I catch'd at the plough-tail'. Patronising judgements from the *literati* meant peasant poets were encouraged to use marginalising 'rustic' styles; MacDiarmid thought 'Burns as a "ploughman poet" has been fatal' to Scottish autodidacts. To be placed in the company of Ossian and Burns gained the autodidact a limited form of critical attention but, to achieve critical recognition, the peasant poet's choice of genres and styles was limited, in the main, to oral-style verse; more experimental work was discouraged. Tom Leonard, in *Radical Renfrew* (1990), has eloquently shown the lasting, negative influences of autodidactic typecasting.<sup>17</sup>

Even with these reservations, though, it can be seen that peasant poets from the weaver William Thom to Ellen Johnson, 'The Factory Girl', and the gardener's daughter, Elizabeth Hartley, gained heart from their autodidact predecessors. Inspired by their literary ancestors, Scottish peasant poets often produced individualistic, innovative verse. Semi-professional poets multiplied in Scotland, and a parallel trend may be discerned among English poets, including Ann Yearsley and John Jones, documented in Robert Southey's *The Lives and Works of the Uneducated Poets* (1831). English poets drew strength from the example of their Scottish counterparts; John Clare, in particular, was fascinated by Burns and Hogg and composed several poems in Scots.<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion, 'Poor as a poet' may be understood as a double-edged compliment. Applied to Burns and his followers, drawing on Ossian, autodidactic typecasting helped and hindered Scottish autodidacts in establishing their creative identities. Macpherson and Burns made a lasting contribution to the Scottish 'peasant poet' tradition by offering an opportunity for confidence in traditional patterns of expressive culture, set against the derivative climate of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are real connexions between the Ossianic and Burnsian cults with formative influences on critical notions of *The Peasant Poets of Scotland*. 

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# NOTES

1. Henry Shanks, *The Peasant Poets of Scotland and musings under the beeches*, (Bathgate: Laurence Gilbertson, 1881), p.19.
2. See Robert Crawford, *Devolving English Literature*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992). Adam Smith, qtd David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), p.61.
3. *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725), rpt *The Works of Allan Ramsay*, vol II ed B. Martin and J.W. Oliver, (Edinburgh and London: The Scottish Text Society, 1953), pp.205-77 (Act III scene iv 11.84-85).
4. See William Donaldson, *The Jacobite Song*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988) on the changing image of the Highlander in Scottish culture. See too D.S. Thomson, *The Gaelic Sources of Macpherson's 'Ossian'*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), Andrew Hook, 'Ossian Macpherson as Image Maker', *The Scottish Review*, 36 (1984), pp.39-44. James Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*, 1760 VIII, reprinted *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed Howard Gaskill, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996); all references to Macpherson's works are to this edition, given below within the text in parentheses.
5. Fiona J. Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988). Hugh Blair, *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, The Son of Fingal* (London: T. Becket & P.A. De Hont, 1763), pp.2, 14-17, 21-28, 53-54, 68. Similarly *The Gentle Shepherd* was frequently read as semi-autobiographical, especially in the wake of Macpherson's Ossianic poetry. Ramsay was remade into a genteel (descended from Earls of Dalhousie) 'untutored' poet raised within a 'wild' mountain, 'pastoral' environment. See David Irving, *The Lives of the Scottish Poets*, (Edinburgh: Lawrie, 1804) and *The Poems of Allan Ramsay. To Which is Prefixed the Life of the Author by William Tennant*, (Edinburgh and London: Fairbairn & Anderson, 1819). There are traces of this in Alexander Manson Kinghorn and Alexander Law, *Poems by Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson*, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), calling Ramsay's language 'untutored', p.xiii. More sophisticated modern evaluations include Carol McGuirk, 'Augustan Influences on Allan Ramsay', *Studies in Scottish Literature* 16 (1981), pp.97-109 and Kenneth Simpson, *The Protean Scot* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988).
6. Bailey Saunders, *The Life and Letters of James Macpherson* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1894), pp.29-32.
7. Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (Edinburgh: Kincaid & Creech, 1773-92), vol I, p.413. Burns qtd Maurice Lindsay, *The Burns Encyclopaedia*, 3rd ed (London: St Martin's Press, 1980), p.52. Henry Mackenzie, *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, Appointed to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1805), pp.151-52.
8. *The Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, ed James Kinsley, 3 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 71. Hereafter references to Burns *Poems* are within the text in parentheses. *Robert Burns's Tours of the Highlands and Stirlingshire 1787*, ed Raymond Lamont Brown, (Ipswich: Boydell, 1973).
9. David Daiches, *Robert Burns*, (New York: Rinehart, 1950), p.29.
10. *The Letters of Robert Burns*, ed J. DeLancey Ferguson & G. Ross Roy, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), vol I, 14. Hereafter references to Burns *Letters* are within the text in parentheses.
11. See Valentina Bold, 'Inmate of the Hamlet: Burns as Peasant Poet', *Love and Liberty. Robert Burns: A Bicentenary Celebration*, ed Kenneth Simpson, (Phantassie, East Linton:

Tuckwell Press, 1997), pp.43–52. Henry Mackenzie, *The Lounger*, 97 (1786), rpt ed Donald A. Low, *Robert Burns, The Critical Heritage*, (London: Routledge, 1974), 4.

12. See James Hogg, *Highland Tours*, ed William F. Laughlan, (Hawick: Byway, 1981). Anderson qtd Low, pp.8–9. J.G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*, 1837–38, rpt (Boston: Fireside, 1901), vol 1, pp.357–58.

13. See James Hogg, 'Mr Shuffleton's Allegorical Survey of the Scottish Poets of the Present Day', *The Spy*, 8 Sept 1810, 29 Sept 1810, 2 Nov 1810.

14. James Currie, *The Works of Robert Burns*, 1800, rpt 2 vols, (Montrose: Smith and Hill, 1816), vol 1, pp.3, 13, 158–59, 214–15, 268. R.H. Cromek, *Reliques of Robert Burns*, 4th ed, (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1817), p.iv; James Montgomery, *Eclectic Review*, rpt Low, 42. Francis Jeffrey, rpt Low, 39; Walter Scott, rpt Low, 40. Alexander Peterkin, *A Review of the Life of Robert Burns*, (Edinburgh: Macredie, Skelly and Muckersby, 1815), pp.xiv, li, lvii, lxviii–lxix. Gray qtd Peterkin, pp.lxxxiii–xci.

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